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with one eye open, and the other eye must not be very fast asleep. We could mention a dozen manufacturers, who a few years ago made excellent instruments, but who, coerced by inevitable competition, took a sudden stride, and now find themselves making pianos a hundred per cent. in advance of their old styles—instruments, indeed, which are not excelled in the world.

These reflections are suggested by our examination of a new Grand Pianoforte, manufactured by George Steck & Co., of Eighth street, New York. The manufacture of grand pianos is not new to this firm, for they have for some time past been favorably known both to the profession and the purchasing public; and more recently they have achieved a wide notoriety by the refusal of the U. S. Commissioner, after awarding them space, to admit them at the Paris Exposition for competition with other American piano manufacturers. George Steck & Co., however, were not to be bluffed even by a U. S. Commissioner, so they brought the whole transaction before the bar of public opinion, which unequivocally decided in their favor.

The instrument which George Steck & Co. have recently brought out, is a Grand pianoforte in every sense of the word. Those qualities which we recognize as necessary to produce an instrument which shall be agreeable in the parlor, and shall still have enough reserved tone to be effective in a concert room, are perfect purity of vibration under the greatest amount of forcing, an out-speaking quality of tone, at once powerful, clear, ringing, but sympathetic, which will travel through space, and seem to broaden as it travels, together with a touch so finely organized, that gradation of power is perfectly at the control of the performer. It may be well imagined that such qualities can only result from the most thorough and perfect manufacture.

We have carefully, and frequently, examined and tried George Steck & Co.'s new Grand Pianoforte, and find it admirable in every respect. In tone, it is noble and out-speaking; its vibrations are clear and ringing, their purity rendering the harmony, when dispersed through space, homogeneous, rich and compact, achieving the great need of such an instrument, namely, to carry the tones rich and unbroken, to every part of the hall. The scale is finely graduated, attenuating from the lowest to the highest note in true proportion, so that the most perfect equality exists through the whole range of octaves. In quantity, the tone is ample, and no power applied seems to exhaust its resources, but, on the contrary, it gives the player full scope for the most powerful effects, and, at the same time, preserves the individuality of its tones, without noise or

confusion. In quality, it is rich and sympathetic, and has such mobility of tone, that it is capable of the finest shades of expression, and the performer finds ample means for the exhibition of his most delicate fancies, and his most refined sentiments. Its touch is all that could be desired, meeting the wants of every peculiarity in technique, so that in all respects it is a first-class instrument, and ranks with the best specimens of the few celebrated manufacturers of Grand Pianos. Steck & Co. have leaped over years of graduated improvement, and have earned, at once, a position which other firms have taken years to attain. We congratulate them very sincerely, for we are glad to chronicle another triumph of American art, and another successful contestant for the highest honors of pianoforte making.

A deputation from Newark waited on us yesterday, bearing a scroll on which was engraved in German text the following stultifying conundrum: "Why is weak Lager Bier a paradox?" "Because it is Teutonic, and it isn't too tonic!"

We promised to print it; we do so. Kind readers, forgive us!

WHAT THE THEATRES ARE DOING.

There is little—or rather so much doing in a dramatic way—that it is hardly worth recording.

Everybody is doing just what they have done before.

And without trying to imitate Daly's ridiculous style, in which he makes public opinion in half a dozen papers of this city, we would say that the fact can only be stated in positive paragraphs.

Last week we spoke of "Maud's Peril," at Wallack's.

This week we have to say that it is running just the same, with success—as we predicted.

Of the New York Theatre, we have only to say that "Norwood" has been withdrawn—as we predicted.

And

"Under the Gaslight"

Has been substituted.

* * * * *

At which we are astonished.

Except that it draws—

Which is more astonishing!!!!

The next is the Olympic, which is prospering in spite of Fox's Bottom.

It is wonderful how these things take hold of New York; and yet not wonderful when we see how much those Olympic chaps have got ahead of all that have gone before.

And then comes the Broadway—which should teach Mr. Florence that a man of his ability should—in spite of all the ridiculous things we said week before last—get new

plays to show his ability in, and he has it—a large amount being posted in this office on that fact.

The next is that little Fifth Avenue Theatre, round the corner from Broadway, in Twenty-third street, which is making one of those quiet successes which laugh to scorn all the critics, and simply says:

"Here we are! If you like us, buy us, and if you don't, go on your ways rejoicing."

And!

The public buy it.

Of the "Black Crook," we have nothing to say until—as Paddy would say—it is changed into the new piece which will come somewhere in January.

The "Devil's Auction,"

As we predicted!!!

Has gone to the Academy, and with its great advantages there, has made a second success.

They have added to their company about the prettiest woman and the cleverest actress that has lately debuted on the New York stage,—which her name is—Miss Hattie Thorne.

Showing the taste of the management on that point, anyhow.

Having said this, we have said about all.

We have to note an improvement both in matter and manner of the music now performed to illustrate the "Pilgrim" at Bunyan Hall; the selections, until the present week, having been far too puerile and insignificant. The scenes of this Panorama are so various, that opportunity is afforded for every class of music, the most secular strains being in keeping with the Vanity Fair pictures; but the music throughout might be brightened and strengthened, and the life now wanting, be imparted to performers and audience, by this very important adjunct to an entertainment.

THE EXHIBITION OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN.

Last week, it was our intention to take up the exhibition of the Academy once again, and see if it were possible to say anything pleasant about it. But as we undertake seriously to handle it, we are sadly at fault.

Let the public simply place themselves in our shoes, and enter the exhibition without a catalogue, that they may lose sight of all the great names that hang upon the Academy walls, and only judge the pictures by their merits.

Having done this, our last week's notice comprises everything we would or could say. But beyond this we see eminent names on the catalogue—when we at last make up our minds to consult one—which ought to demand attention.

We find such names as McEntee, S. A. Mount, Edwin White, Brevoort, Sonntag,

Lo Clear, Richardson, Johnson, Greene, Stearns, Weir, Flagg, Colman, Shattuck, Durand, Cranch, Kensett, and those men whom we are taught to revere in art, and who, writing after their names N. A., should be regarded in the light of the nobility of art.

As a consequence of the names, we are led to expect something which should attract attention, but we fail to be attracted.

The next question that comes up is the—cause.

This, in dismissing the present exhibition, we have only to say, that we will discuss at a future time, and so discuss as we hope will aid the cause of art, if it does not please the Academy.

FOREIGN GOSSIP.

The Parisian Theatres are in great commotion; one would suppose the closing of the Exhibition had taken them by surprise. The last excursion train bearing away from gay *Lutetia*, the last horde of provincial Goths, Huns and foreigners, who have been crowding her Theatres for months, has departed, and the receipts have fallen at one fell swoop to half their previous amounts. Such a shock was quite unexpected, and the Directors, who have happily and slumberously lounged through the last six months, confiding in the *statu quo* of their bills, are suddenly seized with a feverous activity. New pieces must be provided for the citizens of Paris, who now take repossession of their Theatres. *All'erta Signori Impresarii.*

M. Offenbach has been ill. Mr. Bateman has been sympathetically distressed thereat, and has cablegram'd to Paris. *Comment se porte ce cher Offenbach?* Dites lui, replied that dear Offenbach, that I am better, that my rehearsals for "Robinson Crusoe" are going merrily on, and that like Marshal Saxe at Fontenoy, I am carried to the scene of action; that is the action of scenes, in a litter, rather than miss a single rehearsal! As the Grand Duchess says: "*Eh, b'en! Je vous remercie,*" to which, of course, the reply will be duly sent: "*Eh, b'en il n'y a pas de quoi.*" Mr. Bateman—this may not be generally—it seems is descended from Offenbach on the mother's side!

Patti is, as ever, the particular Goddess of Parisian idolatry. Her success in "Lucia," recently, has been so great that the annals of the *Theatre Italien* show nothing like it for years. Real bouquets, not managerial properties, being enthusiastically showered upon her by the excited auditory; her acting being found as delightful as her singing, the play of her features, it is said, bringing back memories of Malibran, in her happiest moments. Patti is now studying "Semiramide," and Rossini himself has specially adorned with

new cadences, the cavatina of this opera, "*Beltraggio*" for his pet singer. Will she ever find time to come here to be fêted and caressed, and to enchant the musical *dilettanti* of this sphere?

Gounod's "Romeo and Juliet" has been given for the first time in Germany at the Dresden Theatre. The papers there say that the Composer maintains his fame.

Joachim will not visit Paris this season, having made arrangements to traverse and subjugate Germany.

Wagner's Opera "*Les Maitres Chanteurs*" will be given soon at Munich, the Viennese baritone Beek taking the principal character.

The Adventurers, a new opera by Braga, has been given at Milan, resulting in a signal success for the baritone Alessandro Bottero. We ourselves saw Bottero some years ago at the *Rudegonda*, at Milan, in *Don Bucefalo* lately given here at the Academy. In this opera Bottero, who is largely endowed with the *vis comica*, and sings and acts admirably, also played the piano, violin, double base, flute, &c., in the most masterly manner, being in fact the life and soul of the piece. We think he would succeed in this city, and trust we may yet see him here.

A LEGEND OF RHINELAND.

Once upon a time there was an enchanting Duchess of an enchantingly utopian, but as yet undiscovered Duchy known to mortals as Gerolstein. This young and lovely Duchess was so lovable that she was beloved by the surrounding country, and so loving that she loved the surrounding country! particularly the military part of it! One day, attired in her most resplendent military millinery, as she was reviewing her extensive army of twenty-seven men and a drummer, her wandering gaze arrested itself on the Apollo-like figure and Narcissus-like features of a "simple private" among her gallant warriors; and she exalted this private publicly, and on the spot, to his own speechless, but gymnastic rapture! and to the utter confusion and dismay of her venerable preceptor, her utterly ferocious but perfectly harmless General-in-Chief, and her soft-hearted but soft-headed fiancé, Prince Paul. She, the enchanting Duchess, sips the regimental wine with him, the "simple private," now, however, a Captain; sings the regimental song with him and dances the regimental dance with him: finally, creates him Commander-in-Chief of her entire forces, bestows upon him the sword of her honored Pa, (with Chorus) and dispatches him to annihilate the enemies of the State! The hero vanquishes the said enemy—supposed by competent historians to number—artillery, infantry, and cavalry,—twenty-three!—and triumphantly returns to his vivacious sovereign, who overwhelms him

with honors and makes the utmost love to him allowed by the law of etiquette. Such, however, is the guileless nature of M. Guffroi, so unsophisticated and innocent is he—having always lived in the country under the fostering care, and influenced by the saintly example, of four maiden aunts! so Josephic in short is this simple son of Mars, that the only impression made upon him by the glances, the sighs, the loving ogles, the "archery"—as Mrs. Malaprop would have said—of the captivated Duchess, is, that he finds it all "very embarrassing." This effect, however, is by no means surprising, when we reflect upon the well known insensibility of the military to the charms of the *beau sexe*, their excessive coyness on the subject of feminine attractions. This *penchant* of the Duchess immensely disconcerts her betrothed, the Prince Leduc, General Duchesne, and her highly respectable tutor—with umbrella, obligato—Baron Puck: and such is the desolating result, that they respectively forsake the pursuit of Grand Duchesses, the army, and the diffusion of useful knowledge, cast themselves wildly into the arena of life, become acrobats and devote their days and nights to the study of athletic feats, eccentric sarabands, and bewilderingly impossible and delightfully absurd *cancans*, which latter solemnity they execute with such marvellous *entrain* that the Duchess, already half repenting her affection for the very obtuse Fritz Baron von Wermouth Bock Bier, is irresistibly drawn into their magic circle, invents a new *cancan* step on the spot, joins their conspiracy, on another spot—for they change their spots perpetually—and the destruction of M. Guffroi is promptly resolved upon. This doomed warrior is sent off to fight at a moment's notice, is decoyed into an ambush consisting of a furious husband and an unpleasant walking stick, marries "Vanda" and is otherwise badly treated; the elastic Duchess transerring her affections to the Baron Grog, a warm friend of the Prince Leduc, until, learning that he is the proprietor of an "enormous wife and countless offspring,"—we quote his friend's words—she finally bestows her affections and her dimply little hand on the Prince, her faithful suitor, reinstates General Duchesne, encumbers Baron Puck with the ever ready sword of her father, and declares her intention to be married immediately, to the simpering satisfaction of her timid spouse, the huge contentment of the General and Tutor, the unbounded delight of the Chorus, who, —sympathetic creatures,—are as easily pleased as cast down, and to the intense envy of every bachelor present, including ourselves: for, the fascinating Lucille, Duchess of Gerolstein, enslaves everybody. And all this delicious absurdity is to be seen at the French Theatre! where, as Mr. Bateman declares on